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They must have been in hiding close by, for it was early next morning that the boy came into my tent alone and very much abashed, and it was some little time before he could recover himself and talk freely as he would before, for he was greatly ashamed of himself.

But, after all, could he help it?

If you can imagine the tropic night, and the boy, full of high resolve, passing up the village street, now half asleep, and the girl, with shining eyes, coming to him out of the hibiscus shadows, and whispering in his ear words—words that I need not say—if you imagine all that, you will understand how it was that I lost my servant.

They both came to see me later on in the day after the marriage, and there was no bashfulness about either of them then. They came hand-in-hand, with the girl's father and mother and some friends, and she told me it was all her fault: she could not wait.

'Perhaps,' she said, with a little laugh and a side-glance at her husband—'perhaps, if he had gone with the thakin to Rangoon, he might have fallen in love with someone there and forgotten me; for I know they are very pretty, those Rangoon ladies, and of better manners than I, who am but a jungle girl.'

And when I asked her what it was like in the forest, she said it was the most beautiful place in all the world.

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Things do not always go so well. Parents may be obdurate, and flight be impossible; or even her love may not be returned, and then terrible things

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happen. I have held, not once nor twice alone, inquests over the bodies, the fair, innocent bodies, of quite young girls who died for love. Only that, because their love was unreturned; and so the sore little heart turned in her trouble to the great river, and gave herself and her hot despair to the cold forgetfulness of its waters.

They love so greatly that they cannot face a world where love is not. All the country is full of the romance of love—of love passionate and great as woman has ever felt. It seems to me here that woman has something of the passions of man, not only the enduring affection of a woman, but the hot love and daring of a man. It is part of their heritage, perhaps, as a people in their youth. One sees so much of it, hears so much of it, here. I have seen a girl in man's attire killed in a surprise attack upon an insurgent camp. She had followed her outlawed lover there, and in the mêlée she caught up sword and gun to fight by his side, and was cut down through neck and shoulder; for no one could tell in the early dawn that it was a girl.

She died about an hour afterwards, and though I have seen many sorrowful things in many lands, in war and out of it, the memory of that dying girl, held up by one of the mounted police, sobbing out her life beneath the wild forest shadow, with no one of her sex, no one of her kin to help her, comes back to me as one of the saddest and strangest.

Her lover was killed in action some time later fighting against us, and he died as a brave man should, his face to his enemy. He played his game, he lost, and paid; but the girl?

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586 'I did not know,' she said; 'I was hot-tempered. I was foolish. But now I know. Ah! the house is so lonely! I have but two ears, I have but two eyes, and the house is so large.'

But the husband refused again.

'What is done, is done. Marriage is not to be taken off and put on like a jacket. I have made up my mind.'

● [762] Then he went away, and after a little the woman went away too. She went straight to the big, lonely house, and there she hanged herself.

You see, she loved him all the time, but did not know till too late.

Men do not often apply for divorce except for very good cause, and with their minds fully made up to obtain it. They do obtain it, of course.

586 177 647 With this facility for divorce, it is remarkable how uncommon it is. In the villages and amongst respectable Burmans in all classes of life it is a great exception to divorce or to be divorced. The only class amongst whom it is at all common is the class of hangers-on to our Administration, the clerks and policemen, and so on. I fear there is little that is good to be said of many of them. It is terrible to see how demoralizing our contact is to all sorts and conditions of men. To be attached to our Administration is almost a stigma of disreputableness. I remember remarking once to a headman that a certain official seemed to be quite regardless of public opinion in his life, and asked him if the villagers did not condemn him. And the headman answered with surprise: 'But he is an official'; as if officials were quite *super grammaticam* of morals. [554]